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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

1. The first agricultural volunteers from Latvia to develop the new territories in Asiatic USSR went in spring 1954. Because of the shortage of agricultural labor in Latvia, no special recruiting campaign was carried out at that time, and only 710 volunteers from Latvia went. Most of them were Komsomol or Party members under 30 years of age. They were mainly recruited from among workers in light industry and the food industry, although a few dozen of them were from machine-tractor stations. About half of them settled in kolkhozy in the area of Chkalov (N 51-45, E 55-06), and the rest on sovkhozy in the area of Kokchetav (N 53-15, E 69-25).
2. Some dozens of these volunteers visited Latvia on vacation at the beginning of 1955. They said that life in the new territories had been very hard for them at the beginning, but that certain improvements had occurred recently; for instance, new houses had been built for them, and higher wages were being paid them than in Latvia.
3. After Nikita S. Khrushchev's call for agricultural volunteers in January 1955, a big recruiting campaign was run jointly by the Komsomol and the Ministries of Agriculture and Sovkhozy in Riga. A larger number volunteered than in 1954, and many were non-Communists. Representatives of Kokchetav Oblast came to Latvia and interviewed all volunteers there. Seven hundred and forty new volunteers departed from Latvia for Kazakhstan on 23 March 1955, and in early April a further 800 volunteers were to go there, including a medical staff of 12 and other specialists.
4. Most of the volunteers from Latvia are Russians; the number of Latvians among them is only about five percent, and most of these go out of a love of adventure.
5. The Soviet Government encourages volunteers by offering free travel; a travel allowance equal to three months' wages, although only half of this was payable in Latvia; and extra coupons for clothing and other purchases in special shops. They are acclaimed as outstanding Soviet patriots, and special farewell ceremonies are arranged for them. In 1955, special attention has been paid to young married couples.

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